1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
NP12 Winnebago NP12



From these facts it is quite clear that, as far as the Thunderbird clan is concerned, the prevailing belief as to the relation of the members of the clan to the clan ancestor is but feebly substantiated by the origin myths.

As mentioned before, the chief of the tribe was selected from the Thunderbird clan, although the selection was apparently restricted to certain families. The functions of the chief of the tribe were connected with peace. He could not lead a war party, although, according to some, he could accompany one. His lodge stood either in the center of the village or at the south end, according to which of the two descriptions one cares to accept, and contained a sacred fireplace, around which only members of the Thunderbird clan could sit. This lodge was an asylum for all wrongdoers. No one could be killed there, and a prisoner who succeeded in making his escape to it was spared. Even a dog destined for a sacrifice at the war-bundle feast was freed if he took refuge in it. The Thunderbird chief always acted as intercessor between wrongdoers and their avengers. Even in so extreme a case as the murder of a clansman, he would always attempt a reconciliation by which the life of the murderer might be spared. If necessary, the chief would mortify himself, and with skewers inserted in his back have himself led through the village to the home of the nearest kinspeople of the murdered person.

The chief seems to have had some other miscellaneous functions, the most important of which was, perhaps, his right to prevent an unauthorized war party to depart from the village. If he, as an older man and guardian of peace and the best interests of the tribe, felt that a war party was taking too many risks, he would take his pipe and place it across the path of the one contemplating an unwarranted expedition and thus signify his disapproval. If then the war party chose to go, any mishap was directly chargeable to the leader who disobeyed. Should anyone be killed, the leader was regarded almost in the same light as a willful murderer, and the kinsmen of the deceased warrior could demand redress.

Our main informant for the Thunderbird clan summarized the functions as follows:

> The chief is chosen from one of the "greater" Thunderbird clans[1] and must be a man of well-balanced temper, not easily provoked, and of good habits. The one sacred object he possesses is his pipe. He must be a peacemaker and love all the people in the tribe, the little children included.
>
> If he saw a man, woman, or child passing by, he was to call them in and give them food to eat, for they were his brothers and sisters. All the relatives he has are to look after his possessions and keep him well supplied, for he was supposed to give away things constantly. If any person came to borrow some object from him, he would tell

[1] Redivided the Thunderbird clans into two groups, the real Thunderbird and the Warrior clans. This latter he indeed was identical with the thunderbirds who caused the rain and who were quite different from the other thunderbirds.

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
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Toads are used, but only for poison medicines. The quail's heart 825
is used for the same purpose. If a person is killed outright, his heart 756
is used as a medicine, as the human heart is regarded as having great 826
efficacy in such medicines. It is used in war, for compelling people
to give you presents, and for courting women. The bear likewise is
used for a variety of purposes. Its liver is especially powerful. It
is rubbed over the body whenever in pain. It is often used by
women who have injured themselves in childbirth, or in the form of
tonics, poultices, and emetic; or for toothaches, bathing sore eyes, ear- [757]
aches, headaches; as snuff, as a physic, for burns, strictures, boils, hemor-
rhages, injections in the rectum, consumption, measles, dysentery,
chills, nosebleed, pains in the stomach, and headaches caused by
poisoning.

Sometimes a woman would take a hair of her husband and stick 832
it into some bad medicine. In such a case he would never leave her
for he would become very much enamored of her. If ever she went
away, he would miss her very much. However, he always had a
headache. Finally he would get sick and lose his appetite and then
his eyesight. That is why it is forbidden to use this medicine,
although some still do it.

Many Winnebago are blind, because there is a medicine that 754
causes blindness. If one person offends another who possesses such
a medicine, the latter would cause the offender to become blind.

The Winnebago have medicines for every purpose; for courting, [832]
for becoming rich, for obtaining good looks, etc. Even if a person
is very holy, these poisoners can poison him. If a man was a good
hunter or if he was wise and good, these bad shamans would poison
him. If an individual was a great medicine man and these bad
shamans got jealous, they would poison him. Indeed, only if a person
was poor and lowly would they like him. Such a man they would
never poison for they had no reason for being jealous of him. A
bad shaman is always treated with the greatest respect and honor,
because he kills many people.

A warrior is also greatly respected and flattered. It is the Indian's 554
greatest desire to become a warrior. All desire that, and they also 156
wish to become great medicine men and bad shamans. [756]

This is the way they prepare and use their courting medicines. 832
The courting medicine known to me is a plant of apparently two 278
varieties, one of which has a blue blossom and the other no blossom at
all. Otherwise they are alike. The one with the blue blossom is the
male and the one without the blossom is the female. When I go out
to dig this plant, I do not dig for these two specimens unless I can
find them growing together closely. Even then I do not dig any two [824]
specimens unless the male is found growing on the east side. For
that reason it is very hard to find them. As soon as I find two that

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
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This I know now. The whole thing is untrue. Therefore I stopped using these supernatural powers some time ago.[a]

The old people made me fast so that I might obtain blessings, and that I might lead a life similar to that led by my ancestors. My father asked me to fast so that I might be of some help to my fellowmen as I grew up. It is through fasting that individuals obtain the power of curing disease and restoring a person to health again.

Spirits from above also came to me. They took me to the spirit-shaman village. As the shamans gathered around me they said that the blessing would be very difficult to give me. Then the shaman sitting far in front made himself holy and breathed upon me (i. e., performed the actions of a shaman when treating a patient). When he was finished, then he began to sing and all those in the lodge began to breathe, helping him. Then the second shaman made himself holy and began to breathe and sing. In this way four of them made themselves holy. They were showing me what to do when I came back to earth. If a person on earth is sick (this is what they meant), and is in an almost hopeless condition where no one else could cure him, then they would call for me and offer me tobacco with which I was to sacrifice to the spirits who had taught me.

Indeed I am holy. If a man is sick I can restore him to health. That is what I used to think. I really (had it been true) should have felt it, for I labored earnestly and honestly to be a holy person. Yet in spite of all my exertions I was very unfortunate. I had married twice and both of my wives and all my children died. Indeed, how could I ever consider myself a holy man (i. e., if I couldn't even cure my own wife and children of what value were my "supernatural powers")? For a long time I knew that, at least I should have known it.[b] (I was not holy.) Then I ate the peyote and now I really see myself as I am. Indeed I am not holy. My body is without a soul. I thought myself holy. So I have stopped the practice of the shaman.

[a] The informant had become a convert to the Peyote belief only a short time before he wrote down this account of his fasting, and it is interesting to see that, although he no longer believes in the efficacy of the supernatural powers, he still believes that they exist. Two years after this, however, the same informant explained them, as all the older members of the Peyote cult explain them, namely, as delusions, either caused by the abnormal condition of the youth while fasting or as snares of the devil.

[b] In the words "I should have known it" are summed up the essential change of attitude between the Peyote Winnebago and the older Winnebagoes. The latter, too, had observed the apparent failure of the supernatural powers on many occasions, but instead of attributing them to any diminution of efficacy in the "powers," attributed them, on the contrary, to a lack of something in the individual trying to use the "power," in so far as they thought about it at all. But the essential difference between the two cults, the older one and the Peyote, lies not so much in the logical conclusions their adherents have drawn from the failure of the "supernatural powers" to behave as they were expected to, as in the fact that the Peyote people make the failure of the "power" the subject of discussion and the old Winnebagoes accept the whole concept of "supernatural power" as such, and do not permit it to rise into their consciousness.

1:Radin E-5 (1908-1913) 1923
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life as the Shawnee prophet proposed to do, he substituted an alien religion. It was because he was introducing an alien religion, not because he was introducing a new religion, that he was so intensely hated by the conservative members of the tribe.

When this hostility was at its height a new convert, Albert Hensley, revolutionized the entire cult by introducing the reading of the Bible, postulating the dogma that the peyote opened the Bible to the understanding of the people, and also adding a number of Christian practices. He, like Rave, had been in Oklahoma. He brought back with him many peyote songs, generally in other languages, dealing with Christian ideas, upon which subsequently Winnebago songs were modeled. He also introduced either baptism itself or an interpretation of baptism, and induced Rave to attempt a union with the Christian Church. He seems to have been the only prominent man connected with the peyote who was subject to epileptic fits. He had the most glorious visions of heaven and hell while in his trance, and these he expounded afterwards in terms of Revelation and the mystical portions of the New Testament. Hensley's additions represent a second stratum of borrowed elements, all of which are in the nature of accretions as far as the peyote itself is concerned. The Bible is explained in terms of the peyote. Neither Hensley nor his followers ever interpreted the peyote in terms of the Bible, although other elements of the old Winnebago culture were so interpreted. These elements, however, represented features that even in the old Winnebago cults exhibited a great variability in interpretation.

Rave's attitude toward the innovations of Hensley seems to have been that of a benevolent acquiescence. He himself could neither read nor write. Yet he immediately accepted the Bible and added it to his other regalia. As such it always seems to have remained. To Rave, after all, the peyote was the principal element, and if Hensley chose to insist that the Bible was only intelligible to those who partook of the peyote why that naturally fell within its magical powers. From the entire omission in Rave's account of the Peyote cult of the more important things that Hensley introduced and from the fact that whenever Hensley's influence was not dominant there seems to have been little Bible reading, it seems justifiable to say that Rave's attitude toward these innovations was merely passive.

There never was any rivalry between Rave and Hensley. The latter was, however, a much younger man, quick-tempered, conceited, dogmatic, and withal having a strong mixture of Puritan Protestant ideas. A conflict developed after a while and in a very interesting manner. Rave had allowed a man with an extremely bad reputation, who had been admitted as a member of the Peyote cult, to occupy one of the four positions. Hensley violently pro-

## *Crashing Thunder*

*159 village and there she built me a small lodge in which I
787 and my elder brother were to remain whenever we had to fast through the whole night. At this fasting-place we used to play and before we were really able to spend a night at this particular place we moved away.

*159 After a time I passed from this stage of childhood
857 to another. I now began to use a bow and arrow and I spent my day at play, shooting arrows.

It was at about this time also that I found out that my mother had been told just before I was born that
● [156] she was about to give birth to a child who would not be an ordinary being, and from then on I felt that I must be an uncommon person.

*159 At about the same time my elder sister married a very holy man. My parents gave her in marriage to him. He was a shaman and he thought a great deal of me.

[P. 4]

7: Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12



although the feast was supposedly given in our honor, we were placed on one side of the main participants. After the kettles containing the food had been put on twice, it became daylight and the feast was over.

The following spring we moved to the Mississippi in order to trap. I was still fasting and ate only at night. My brothers used to flatter me, telling me that I was the cleverest of them all and, in consequence, I used to continue fasting although I was often very hungry. In spite of my desire to fast, however, I could not resist the temptation of being around the girls. I wanted always to be near them. They were generally in their menstrual lodges [18] when I looked for them. My parents did not wish me to go near the girls then but I went nevertheless.

My parents told me that only those boys who had no connection with women would be blessed by the spirits. Throughout this time my sole wish was to appear great in the sight of the people. To be praised by my fellowmen was all I desired. And I certainly received what I sought. I stood high in their estimation. That the women might like me was another of the reasons why I wanted to fast. But as to being blessed, I learned nothing about it, although I went around with the air of one who had received many blessings and talked as such a one would talk.

[18] Any contact with menstruating women, or even with objects in any way connected with them, will, it is the firm belief of the Winnebago, destroy the power of sacred objects or individuals temporarily sacred. Fasting youths were regarded as such.

## *Courting*

I used to go out courting and be in the lodges all night and yet, most of the time, I never succeeded in speaking to any of the girls. I did not mind that so much, however, for I was doing it in order to be among the girls. This is what I enjoyed. Indeed I used to go around telling people that I was really keeping company with such and such a girl. I used to say this to my men associates. In reality I did not get much more than a smile from one or two girls. Yet even this I prized as a great thing.

159*
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[156] ●

[P.77]

*159 school but, instead, stayed near the old woman and did various jobs for her. There I stayed all spring.

*159 I had been told that if a person initiated into the
756 Medicine Dance did not regard the affair as sacred this
761 was a sign that he would die soon. This frightened
796 me a good deal for I had been thinking of the whole matter in a very light-hearted fashion and I now felt that this was an indication that I would soon die. I did my best therefore to consider it a sacred ceremony. In spite of all this, however, I did not succeed.

*159 About this time I left for Tomah. It was about the middle of the summer. I stayed and lived with my
[869] grandfather and from that time on was taught by him many of the details of the Medicine Dance. For instance, when I prepared a sweat-bath for him he would teach me some of the songs. I accordingly prepared the bath for him frequently. He would always be grateful and that is another of the reasons why I was glad to do it. Before long I had learned all the songs he knew so that when I was invited to a Medicine Dance I would do all the singing and he would only do the talking. From that time on I said that it was a sacred affair, and from then on I participated in the ceremony for the greatness inhering in it. I boasted
● [156] of its greatness in the presence of women, in order to make a good impression upon them.

[P. 126]

7; Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

## §17. *A Woman Bewitches Me*

Once when I returned to the camp I found some other people there. There I also found my grandfather. He had brought along with him one of the two women with whom I had been living, the older one. I did not like it at all. My grandfather asked me to live with her and I did so during the hunting season. When it was over this woman remained there and I returned to my home with another one. My former wife stayed there a long time, but when she got tired of waiting for me to return, she left.

Just about this time I heard that this former wife of mine, before going away, had used some magical medicine on me. A medicine feast was immediately given me and my scalp treated to counteract the evil effect of what she had used. It was said that she had taken one of my hairs and dipped it into her medicine bundle. This she did in order to prevent me from ever leaving her. If then I left her I would suffer from a headache and perhaps even die. Such was the belief. Fortunately the matter was discovered, my scalp treated and the hair she had taken recovered and washed with medicine. Nothing therefore happened to me.

From that time on I began to live with as many women as I could, for I had developed the idea that I was a lady-killer.

7: Radin E-8 (ca. 1912) 1928 NP12 Winnebago NP12

## §18. *My Brother Is Murdered*

*159 Shortly after this my elder brother was killed. We
[682] two had grown up together and had hardly ever been
[150] separated. I felt quite heartbroken over it. I longed to kill the man who had murdered him. I felt that it would be better if I myself were dead. In this frame
*159 of mind I took to drinking a great deal. Indeed it was
273 my wish to die drinking and I would announce this when I was drinking heavily. Up to that time I had drunk secretly, but now I did so openly. Soon I became a confirmed drunkard. By that time I had quite forgotten the fact that I had wanted to die. Indeed I enjoyed drinking very much.

I got into the habit, then, of giving women whisky
[685] and getting them hopelessly drunk and then I would steal anything of value they possessed. I also learned
[526] to box and soon became quite expert. I was never defeated, and in consequence treated every one roughly. Every one was afraid of me because of my skill with the gloves. My father was a strong man and so were my elder brothers, and neither of them had ever been
● [156] defeated at wrestling. For all these reasons I was very arrogant. Besides all this I was very tall. I am six
[141] feet two inches high and weigh about two hundred and fifty pounds. In actual fact I was not really as strong

## *My Brother Is Murdered*

as I pretended for whenever I woke up from a drunken orgy I found myself firmly bound. 159* [273]

All I did was to wander from place to place, from one woman to another. I had four sisters and from them and from my parents did I receive all that I possessed and yet in spite of this, I claimed to be a great man! I then had two women staying with me as my wives. At one time I had as many as four, two at my parents' house and two at certain relatives of mine. I wasn't serious with any one of them. I lied all the time; I was always telling falsehoods. On one occasion I had four children born to me and each one had a different mother. Even after that I continued courting women and drinking. [593] [156] 159* 588 [577]

In the spring there was always work to do. We rolled logs down the stream and drank. I accepted such occupations because I could then always get as much drink as I wanted. Whenever I had any money I spent it on getting some woman drunk. 159* [22] [273]

[P. 135]

7; Radin E-6 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

## §19. *The Effect of a Pretended Blessing*

159 I was now drinking heavily all the time and I began
273 to boast of being a holy man. I claimed that I had
787 been blessed by certain spirits and I made this claim
● 156 again and again. Of course this was all a lie, for I had
577 never felt a stirring of any kind within me. I made the claim because I had heard others doing it. Generally I made this claim when I was just about drunk, just on the verge of getting boisterous but still vaguely conscious of what I was saying. Then I would say, for instance, that I had been blessed by a Grizzly-spirit, that he had blessed me with the power of being uncontrollable, that he had taught me certain songs. These I would then sing at the top of my voice. I used to exert all the power I had to imitate a grizzly bear. The bystanders would try to hold me but it always required a large number of men to do so. Now I thought this exhibition of mine an act worthy of praise.

159 After that I began to claim that I had been blessed
156 by many spirits. I made the claim at one time that I
577 was really the reincarnation of one of the benevolent
787 giant spirits and that my name was *Good-heart*, that I
775 was now living as a human being among men. Such
776 was my claim and people believed me.

000 Once when I was on one of my drinking sprees I

*159 755 drink." Thus she spoke. I was surprised. Perhaps
● [156] I am really holy, after all, I thought.

After this incident, of course, I boasted of my powers
*159 even more, for now I was really convinced that I pos-
156 sessed sacred power. I talked as do those who have
787 knowledge of blessings obtained from all the spirits in creation; I spoke with all the authority of a great medicine man. I used to do the singing for my band during the performance of the Medicine Dance, and as I had a deep bass voice, everybody liked it. Sometimes I would be given offerings of food in a kettle.

*159 I always drank a great deal whenever a Medicine
213 Dance was given and frequently I would knock people
796 unconscious when I was drunk, even those in the vicinity of the camp.

## §29. *My Release from Prison and First Acquaintance with the Peyote*

*159 When we were released we found our relatives waiting for us. My older brother was there, and with him I went home. We began to drink immediately. I was [273] very happy, although when I was in prison I had felt that I would never drink again. We reached the [837] Winnebago the same day. There I met a woman, and I cohabited with her that very night. I had been [152] desiring that for a long time. Then I began to drink again. After a while I went to Black River Falls and [837] there met my former wife, whom I immediately took back again.

[527] The Indians were just then celebrating their midsummer feasts. I went among them, took part, and drank ● [156] a great deal. I considered myself a brave man and a medicine man; I thought myself a holy man, a strong one, and a favorite with women. I felt that I was in [832] possession of many courting medicines. A brave man I felt myself; a fleet runner. I was an excellent singer [527] of songs at the Brave Dance; [99] I was a sport, and I [273] wanted whisky every day.

My mother and father had gone to the Missouri River, to the Winnebago living in Nebraska. They left me in charge of two horses and a wagon belonging

[99] A non-sacred war dance whose songs were very popular.

7: Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12



most is the fact that they are making fun of you. Quite apart from that, however, I am not used to them." I was speaking quite dishonestly.

I was then staying at my sister's place. She was a peyote follower and had gone on a visit to Oklahoma. After a while she returned. At that time I was staying with a number of women and from them I obtained money. Once I got drunk and was locked up for six days. After my sister returned she and her friends paid more attention to me than ever before. This was particularly true of her husband. I was given horses and a wagon. I was really treated very tenderly. I told them I believed in the peyote because they treated me so nicely. I knew that they did this because they wished me to eat the peyote. I, in my turn, was very kind to them. I thought I was fooling them and they thought they were converting me.

We moved after a while to a place where there was to be a large peyote gathering. I knew that they had arranged for this in order to get me to join. Accordingly I spoke to my younger sister and said, "Sister, I would be quite willing to eat this peyote ordinarily, but I don't like the woman with whom I am living just now and I think I shall leave her. Now I have been given to understand that among you, when married people eat the peyote they will always have to stay together. I shall therefore join you as soon as I have married a woman with whom I wish to stay permanently." Then my brother-in-law came in and my sister told him what I had said and he spoke to me,

7:Radin E-5 (ca. 1912) 1926 NP12 Winnebago NP12

## *Crashing Thunder*

*159 795 When John Rave had finished I ate five peyote. Then my brother-in-law and my sister came and gave themselves up. They asked me to stand there with them. I did not like it, but I did it nevertheless. "Why should I give myself up? I am not in earnest [597] and I intend to stop this as soon as I get back to Wisconsin. I am only doing this because they have given me presents," I thought. "I might as well get up, however, since it doesn't mean anything to me." So I stood up. The leader began to talk and I suddenly began to feel sick. It got worse and worse and finally I lost consciousness. When I came to, I found myself lying on my back. Those with whom I had been standing were still there. As a matter of fact, I had regained consciousness as soon as I fell down. I felt like leaving the place that night but I did not do it. I was quite tired out. "Why have I done this?" I said to myself. "I promised my sister that I would not do it." So I thought and I tried to leave but I couldn't. I suffered intensely. At last day dawned. Now I thought that they regarded me as one who had had a trance and had seen something.

Then we went home and they showed me a passage in the Bible where it said that it was a shame for any man to wear long hair. I looked at the passage. I was [302] not a man learned in books, but I wanted to give the [156] impression that I knew how to read so I told them to cut my hair. I was still wearing it long at the time. After my hair was cut I took out a lot of medicines, many small bundles of them. These and my shorn hair

## *The Effects of the Peyote*

I gave to my brother-in-law. Then I cried and my brother-in-law also cried. He thanked me, told me that I understood and that I had done well. He told me that Earthmaker alone was holy; that all the blessings and medicine I possessed were false; that I had been fooled by the bad spirit. He told me that I had now freed myself from much of this bad influence. My relatives expressed their thanks fervently. 159* 795 [776]

On the fourth night of my stay they had another meeting and I went to it again. There I again ate peyote. I enjoyed it and sang along with the others. I wanted to be able to sing immediately. Some young men were singing and I enjoyed it so I prayed to Earthmaker and asked him to let me learn to sing right away. That was all I asked for. My brother-in-law was with me all the time. At that meeting all the things I had given my brother-in-law were burnt up. [533]

Now the fact that my brother-in-law had told me that I understood, had pleased me and I felt good when daylight came. As a matter of fact, I had not received any knowledge at all. I thought, however, that this was the proper way to act, so I did it. After that, I would attend meetings occasionally and I looked around for a woman whom I cared to marry permanently. Before long that was the only thing that I would think of when I attended the meetings. [156]

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